

not also give myself the female spelling of the name, but that never bothered me.

today only two people still call me "jodie": my only surviving aunt and ron koertge. sometimes ron calls me "bear," which was given me by my first and only good karate teacher twenty-five years ago, just before he got busted in a hot car. "bear" is flattering, so of course i don't mind it. sometimes my wife also calls me "jodie," but there is mockery in her voice. i call myself "toad" sometimes, especially in poems, although that toad is not always myself. john owen also calls me that, loudly, when i run into him in public. george carroll does too. and paul the bartender. they call me that affectionately, i think.

i guess my favorite nowadays is simply "ger." when people call me that they seem to be really getting a kick out of it. i have always enjoyed being a source of amusement for people. frankly, i often find myself rather amusing. and "ger" sounds youthful, boyish, as i frequently wish i still were. yes, just call me "ger," and i promise to spare you all tales of white whales.

ANARCHY, SI; CHAOS, NO

for years cars piled up on the traffic circle. the legend was that the designer of it was killed driving it on the day that it opened. the city constantly re-aligned the lanes, and motorcycle cops wrote reams of tickets attempting to reinforce each new configuration. but nothing could stem the tide of vehicular blood.

things went on this way for decades.

then one day the lane markings were paved over and the old directional signs came down, no doubt in preparatuon for new mandates.

motorists immediately made those adjustments that made sense and the collision rate

declined dramatically. the traffic flowed smoothly. efficiency and safety both flourished. all the attempts at human engineering had proved not only unnecessary but downright counter-productive.

TO GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR IS THE BEST YOU CAN EXPECT

i overheard how bukowski had these incredibly reasonable mortgage payments on his very nice house in san pedro and yet he had this constant worry that he wouldn't always be able to make them.

i can understand that. he didn't, after all, have a steady job, and who would not be a fool to count on the continuance of literary income, especially anyone who'd known the years when royalties were zilch.

so he knew well the way employers and the government can get you by the balls, and now he had a chance to learn, before dying, the way s-and-ls can get their claws into you.

so why did he do it?
no doubt partly for his wife,
a woman whom he loved and who was giving him
a better life than he had ever known,

but he also enjoyed the place,
the garden and the view,
a good place to raise cats,
a bit of spaciousness, a little privacy,
room to garden, room for a narrow lap-pool,
some shelves to keep his books on,
improved audio for bruckner and ludwig b.,
some neighbors and some distance from them,
a little girl across the street who
brought out the grandfather in him.

and who really wants to end up living in the gutter,
dying in humiliation?

so, a little mortgage-worry wasn't all that bad a
trade-off.
and anyone who thinks that you don't pay for
what you get in life
is either an old fool
or a very young one.